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The report and subsequent press briefings were careful to point out that whilst Open Registries and even the FoC system do not necessarily lead to IUU activity, it is the uncontrolled nature of these that lead to abuses by vessels and owners, and indeed enables such activity. Further the report documents publicly available information showing that a range of abuses do occur under the cover of open registries and FoCs. These range from labour rights abuses to the avoidance of conservation and management measures. Many organisations including the Environmental Justice Foundation, International Transport Workers Federation and the FAO have indicated that the FoC system underpins IUU fishing.

WWF welcomes this heightened discussion regarding the extent of, and solutions to, the IUU challenge. We are presently preparing a considered response from our Director General to the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize and pledge to assist those working to eradicate IUU fishing from their Registries.

Thank you Mr Chair.